

CHAPTER ONE

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Livable South Downtown planning effort is a multi-year planning process conducted by the Seattle Department of Planning and Development. The project will result in land use recommendations for City Council consideration in 2008. South Downtown planning involves assessment of growth possibilities, review of community objectives, and analysis of potential updates to land use and zoning regulations that will support a desirable future for South Downtown.

The Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) was prepared to describe the environmental effects of possible land use actions in South Downtown as required by the State Environmental Policy Act (SEPA). The DEIS provides a comprehensive analysis of the implications of possible zoning choices. It also provides information to the public and to decision-makers, and ensures that environmental considerations are incorporated into planning.

Chapter 1 summarizes four possible land use scenarios or “alternatives” that are fully described in Chapter 2. Chapter 1 also features a table that compares the alternatives’ impacts (Table 1-1). These impacts are analyzed in detail throughout Chapter 3. Several technical reports that support the impact analysis are contained in the Appendices to the EIS, bound in a separate volume.

The Livable South Downtown planning project acknowledges the visions expressed in the neighborhood plans, including Pioneer Square, Chinatown/International District (I.D.), and the Greater Duwamish Manufacturing and Industrial Center Plan. South Downtown planning pursues the next steps to implement land use-related aspects of these plans, and analyzes whether existing conditions warrant a change of direction in order to encourage desirable patterns of growth.

EIS ALTERNATIVES AND GROWTH SCENARIOS

The DEIS compares and contrasts four alternative zoning scenarios for the South Downtown study area (see Figure 1-1). Three of the alternatives (1, 2, and 3) suggest varied sets of rezones for sub-areas throughout South Downtown. Alternative 4 analyzes future growth within the framework of existing zoning.

- Alternative 1 proposes a greater degree of change to zoning in the western portion of the study area
- Alternative 2 suggests greater change in the central and eastern portions of the study area
- Alternative 3 proposes a set of rezones that is distributed evenly across the study area
- Alternative 4, the “No Action” Alternative, addresses future conditions within existing zoning.

The EIS impact analysis is facilitated by projecting patterns of growth that are likely to occur by the year 2030 under each of the alternative zoning scenarios. The hypothetical distribution of development identifies future buildings that would be possible under each alternative’s zoning pattern. The amount of assumed growth aligns with growth projections of the Puget Sound Regional Council (PSRC) for 2030, as well as the City’s projections of future growth. The Population and Employment section of Chapter 3 provides further discussion on this topic.

